

# Real-time Operating Systems and Systems Programming

## Lecture 3 Understanding Memory (Stack)

# Memory

- Processor registers (hidden in C)
- RAM
- Devices (hard disk)
- Internet?
- People??
- Books???

# Stack

- Simple data structure
- Efficient implementations
- FILO (as opposed to FIFO)
- Operations: Push, Pop
- Important to us due to call stack
- Often supported in hardware

# C implementation

```
typedef struct {  
    int size;  
    int items[STACKSIZE];  
} STACK;
```

```
void push(STACK *ps, int x)  
{  
    if (ps->size == STACKSIZE) {  
        fputs("Error: stack  
overflow\n", stderr);  
        abort();  
    } else  
        ps->items[ps->size++] = x;  
}
```

```
int pop(STACK *ps)  
{  
    if (ps->size == 0){  
        fputs("Error: stack  
underflow\n", stderr);  
        abort();  
    } else  
        return ps->items[--ps->size];  
}
```

# Hardware implementation

- Special stack register (can be read/written)
  - We will name it %esp in further examples
- Assembly instructions to manipulate it

# The Dreadful Assembly

# Short introduction to assembly

- Mainly moves data around (mov series)
- Jumps, conditional jumps (jmp series)
- Arithmetics
- Management (push, pop, call, return)
- Examples from IA32
  - Word = 16 bit due to ancient history
  - Double word for 32 bits

# Registers

- 8 registers for 32bit values
- General purpose: %eax %ecx %edx %ebx %edi %esi (Historical names, would be simpler)
- Fun registers: %esp %ebp (Stack pointer & Frame pointer)
- Can be addressed also in smaller segments
- %eax[            %ax[%ah[   ] %al[   ] ]



# Aside: C numeric constants

- Decimal: 10; -10
- Octal: 037 0431 (leading 0)
- Hexadecimal: 0xf1 0xdada (leading 0x)
- Unsigned: 10u, 0xafU
- Long: 10l 10L; Short: 10s 10S
- Floating-point: 0.04 4e-2 10.0 1e2

# Operands

- Instructions have operands (arguments)
- Immediate
  - Constant values
  - \$1024, \$-10, \$0xdeadbeef
- Register
  - %eax, %al
- Memory
  - $24(\%eax, \%edx, 1) \sim Immediate(reg_b, reg_i, scale)$

Additional shift

# Examples

```
movl $0x5040, %eax  
movl %ebp, %esp  
movl (%edi, %ecx), %eax  
movl $-17, (%esp)
```

# Stack operations

%eax = 0x123      %edx = 0      %esp = 0x108

pushl %eax

%eax = 0x123      %edx = 0      %esp = 0x104

popl %edx

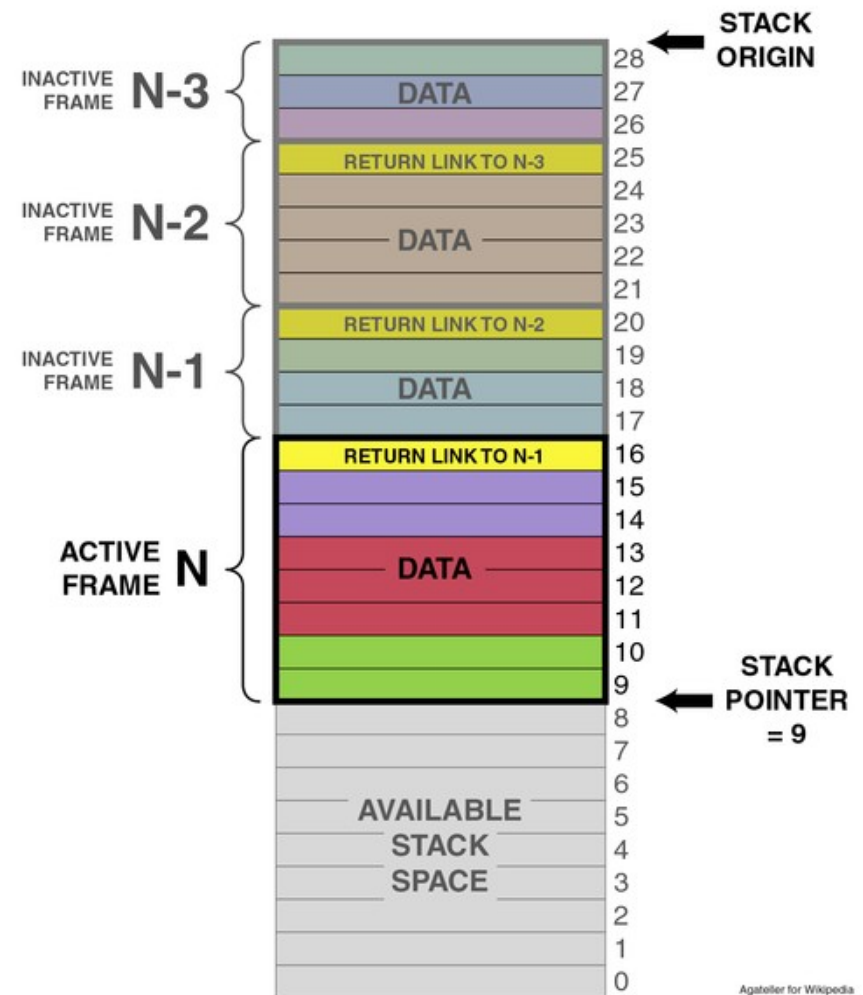
%eax = 0x123      %edx = 123      %esp = 0x108

# Procedures

- Call involves passing both data and control from one code to another.
- Must store local variables and arguments, deallocate them on exit

# Stack frame

- Uses frame pointer to keep track of previous frame
- Stack pointer tracks “top” of stack



# One frame contains

- Address of last %ebp
  - Current frame pointer points to it (data accessed in relation to it)
- Saved registers
- Local variables ( out of registers; array; & )
- Any temporary data
- Argument building area
- Return address (only if not active frame)

# Transfer of control

- For procedure calls, processor supports the following instructions:
  - **call *Label* / call \**Operand*** – calls procedure
  - **leave** – prepares stack for return
  - **ret** – return from call

1. Prepare stack
2. call procedure
3. Profit



# Call instruction

- Can start executing from an address or a label
- Pushes return address to stack (return address is next instruction from the call)
- Jumps to called address (= set program counter to the start of a procedure)

# Ret instruction

- Pop an address from stack
- Go to the address (copy it to Program Counter)
- *To use properly, stack pointer must point to the “bookmark” address that call instruction stored.*
- For preparation, leave instruction is used

Leave:

```
movl %ebp, %esp
```

```
popl %ebp
```

```
# note: %ebp == stack frame
```

# Recap

- *call* pushes return address to stack, jumps
- new procedure saves old stack frame to stack
- Copies current stack pointer to frame pointer
- ...
- Copy frame pointer to stack pointer
- Restore old frame pointer
- Return to stored bookmark

# Register conventions

- `%eax`, `%edx`, `%ecx` – Caller save
  - Procedures can overwrite them as want, but must restore them after return, as they may get overwritten
- `%ebx`, `%esi`, `%edi` – Callee save
  - Procedures can overwrite them only if they save them and restore them before returning
- `%eax` is the return register

# What reflects to C?

- Automatic variables live on stack
- Function arguments are copied to stack before calling (call by value)
- Using pointers as arguments to functions can make calls by reference
- Uninitialized variables contain garbage
- Pointers to freed stack contain garbage
- Writing over a stack frame pointer is Not Good
- Writing over the return address is worse

# Buffer overflow exploitation

- When a buffer overflows, it is possible to write over the return pointer to point within the buffer itself
- The buffer gets executed
- Newer C implementations protect stack for desktop compilation

# How to remove variable from stack?

- Easy, declare it as *static*.
  - `static int i = 0xf00;`
- Moves the variable to heap

# Nice hack using the stack

- The state of a program is defined by:
  - CPU register content (easy to save and restore as we saw)
  - Stack content
  - Heap content
- You could save the program state by saving the above



# Long Jump

```
#include <setjmp.h>
int setjmp(jmp_buf env);
void longjmp(jmp_buf env, int val);
```

- ♦ setjmp ja longjmp can aid interrupt handling
- ♦ setjmp() saves the *stack* into env buffer, for use by longjmp() function. The env is usable only once.
- ♦ setjmp() returns 0 on the first call and a different value on the second call after longjmp() has been called. It can return "twice"!

## Long Jump (2)

```
void longjmp(jmp_buf env, int val);
```

- `longjmp()` restores the saved environment. After `longjmp()` the program behaves like `setjmp()` would have returned the value `val`. `longjmp()` cannot send 0 since it will be replaced with 1.

```
jmp_buf env;  
if ((val=setjmp(env)) == 0)  
    printf("Now we have set long jump\n");  
else  
    printf("Long jump has returned value  
%d\n",val);  
.....  
longjmp(env, 3);
```

long.c